

How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks

60-Minute Module Series

PROGRAM PLANNING

Training Guide

**National Park Service
Volunteers-In-Parks Program**



How To SUCCEED With VOLUNTEERS-IN-PARKS

60-Minute Module Series

Introduction
Program Planning
Needs Assessment
Motivation
Designing Jobs
Recruitment
Interviewing
Orientation
Training
Safety Management
Supervision
Delegation
Performance Reviews
Recognition

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INTRODUCTION

Program planning is a key developmental process that measures the current status of your volunteer program, and serves to chart the future direction of the program in line with the park's management objectives.

Most parks have a general sense that their volunteers are doing needed work. Too often, however, the work is defined by individual staff members, or even by the volunteers themselves. By contrast, comprehensive volunteer program planning identifies true parkwide priorities, including the means to address them.

To create buy-in by all staff and volunteers, successful volunteer program planning requires a strong team effort. Park management, park staff (representing all divisions), park partners and volunteers should all be involved. The ultimate objective should be to develop a mission statement and long-term goals with specific outcomes that can guide and support the volunteer program in reaching its full potential.

Ideally, the same team that carries out the program planning effort should oversee a parkwide needs assessment, which in turn leads to the development of written job descriptions and then to a targeted recruitment effort to find the best qualified volunteers to fill those jobs.

PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The **Purpose** of this module is to establish the need for volunteer program planning that is defined by consensus, based on park-wide priorities, and is keyed to outcomes.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate the strengths and weaknesses of their current volunteer program.
2. Explain the process and importance of developing a mission statement.
3. Articulate how a well-managed VIP program directly benefits the park superintendent.
4. Identify and commit to ways of strengthening their volunteer program.

GENERAL NOTES TO TRAINER

1. This workshop is in a suggested format. Feel free, however, to personalize it to meet your park needs.
2. The developmental exercises in this module should help lead participants to the conclusion that comprehensive parkwide volunteer program planning is both important and necessary.
3. Program Planning works in combination with Needs Assessment to lay the groundwork for a successful volunteer program. These two modules are best presented in conjunction with Designing Jobs and Recruitment since each is dependent on the other for success.
4. When this module is presented at the park level, it is recommended that the Superintendent be present to introduce it and to lend his/her full support to this important planning effort.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Transparency Section Method of Presentation Time
Handout

| | | | |
|--|---|---|------------|
| T-1 H-1 T-2 | Introduction Introduction Learning Objectives Key Concepts | Presentation | 5 minutes |
| T-2 H-1 T-3 H-2 H-3 | Concept 1 An objective assessment of your current VIP program | Presentation Activity | 15 minutes |
| T-3 H-1 T-4 H-4 | Concept 2 A Mission Statement | Presentation Brainstorming Group Activity | 20 minutes |
| T-3 H-1 T-5 H-5 T-6 H-6 T-7 H-7 T-8 T-9 | Concept 3 Support from top management and other staff is critical | Presentation Activity | 15 minutes |
| T-3 H-1 | Summary/Wrap-Up/ Evaluation | Summary Remarks | 5 minutes |

TOTAL TIME: 60 minutes

TRAINER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Time: 5 minutes

T-1: Purpose of Program Planning

T-2: Learning Objectives

T-3: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

Opening exercise: Designed to demonstrate the need for program planning

Ask participants to think about three questions:

How does your VIP Program support your superintendent's management objectives?

Does your park have a mission statement for your VIP Program?

Are your volunteers performing priority work? What is the goal of your VIP Program in the next year? The next five years?

Does your VIP Program have clear leadership and direction?

If you would have trouble answering these questions, program planning can help.

Read purpose of program planning or summarize learning objectives.

This training is based on **three Key Concepts**

CONCEPT 1

Time: 15 minutes

An objective assessment of your current VIP program is the starting point for all of the planning that will follow.

T-3: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

T-4: The Benefits of Volunteer Program Assessment

H-2: How Close Are You To a Model Volunteer Program?

H-3: The Benefits of Conducting a Volunteer Program Assessment

Activity:

Ask participants to take a quick snapshot of their volunteer program by using the handout “How Close Are You to a Model Volunteer Program” as a reference.

After working individually for 5 minutes, have participants get together in pairs and compare the strengths and weaknesses of their programs. Ask participants to identify 2 of the lowest rated components and to propose actions to strengthen them.

Transition to Concept 2 by saying that “Many of these weaknesses can be addressed by first establishing a solid foundation for your program.”

CONCEPT 2

Time: 20 minutes

A mission statement will create the philosophical framework for your VIP program.

T-3: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

T-5: Mission Statement

H-4: Developing a Mission Statement

Brainstorming

Ask: "Why Do We Have A Volunteer Program?"

Make sure responses reflect what's in it for volunteers, the NPS, and the public. Record responses on flip chart if desired. There are many benefits in having a volunteer program.

A mission statement is one way of summarizing those benefits.

Definition of mission statement:

A mission statement identifies the main business and philosophy of the organization. Mission statement focuses on the following:

- Resource
- Visitors
- Volunteer/park staff

Additional Handout: examples of volunteer program mission statements

Group activity:

Have small groups each pick a park represented by a participant and write a mission statement using handout H-4 as a guide. Make sure the mission statement is specific to the park selected.

Things to consider:

- What do volunteers add?
- What is the value in working with volunteers?
- Is the mission statement inviting to diverse audiences?

Have several groups read their missions statements. Record mission statements on flip chart paper and post around the room if desired.

Summary:

Ideally, every division in the park should have the opportunity to provide input into the development of a park volunteer program mission statement. In fact, it is only with full staff support, including management support, that your volunteer program will succeed. That leads us to Concept 3.

CONCEPT 3

Time: 15 minutes

Support from top management and other staff is critical for the ultimate success of your volunteer program

T-3: Key Concepts

H-1: Key Concepts

T-6: What Does Your Superintendent Think of Volunteers?

H-5: What's in it for the Superintendent?

H-6: We Need Your Feedback

H-7: Characteristics of Commitment to Highly Effective VIP Programs

T-7: Promoting Good Volunteer/Staff Relations

T-8: Why Do Some Paid Staff Resist Volunteers?

H-8: Symptoms of Paid Staff Resistance

T-9: What are Some Symptoms of Paid Staff Resistance to Volunteers?

T-10: What are the Long-Term Goals of Your VIP Program?

Ask participants:

"What does your superintendent think of volunteers?"

"How is that demonstrated?"

How do you get parkwide commitment to your program from management as well as other paid staff and volunteers?

Activity:

Have small groups come up with their top five answers.

If time permits:

Activity:

Have each participant identify up to 5 long-term goals for their park.

Additional handout: examples of park goals

SUMMARY/WRAP-UP/EVALUATION

Time: 5 minutes

T-3: Key Concepts

H-1 Key Concepts

The road to a successful volunteer program is paved with good planning. Involve the superintendent, park managers, other park staff, park partners and volunteers. Work hard to develop a sense of ownership. Your self-assessment, your mission statement, and your short and long-term goals, will all reflect the strength of a unified team. You will have the building blocks in place to create a truly successful VIP program.

END 60-MINUTE TRAINING

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXPANDED ACTIVITIES

1. In order to fully assess your volunteer program and develop a mission statement, you may wish to schedule a full day retreat.
2. In order to fully develop your volunteer program, additional time should be spent in writing long term goals for the park.
3. The issue of paid staff resistance to volunteers is very sensitive, and may require considerably more time than is available in this 60-minute module, to reach a satisfactory level of comfort for all participants.
4. Your volunteers can also participate directly in the process of program planning. One way is to use handout H-6, "We Need Your Feedback," a questionnaire designed to give departing volunteers a chance to provide helpful feedback. A similar form could be developed for a group of volunteers after they have been on the job for a while.

RESOURCES

1. Cambell, Katherine Noyes and Susan J. Ellis. *The (Help) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management*, Energize, Inc., 1995.
2. Ellis, Susan J. *From the Top Down: The Executive Role In Volunteer Program Success*, Energize, Inc., 1996.
3. *Field Guide to National Park Service Performance Management*. National Park Service, Office of Strategic Planning, 1998. [See Overview, 2-7; NPS GPRA Implementation, 3-5 regarding mission statements]
4. Lynch, Rick. *Laying the Foundation with Mission and Vision: Creating a Strategic Volunteer Program*, Points of Light Foundation, 1996.
5. McCurly, Steve, and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community*, 1996.
6. Scott, Cynthia, Dennis Jaffe and Glen Tobe. *Organizational Vision, Values, and Mission*. Order from Crisp Publishing, 1200 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
7. Wilson, Marlene, Betty Stallings, Marilyn MacKenzie, Arlene Schindler, Jane Justis, et. al, *University of Colorado Volunteer Management Program Video Series*, Level I and Level II workshops, Volunteer Management Associates, 1997.
8. Wroblewski, Celeste J. *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development: A YMCA Resource Kit*, YMCA of the USA, 1994.